



Department of Development Services
Planning Division
Meeting Minutes of the
Planning & Zoning Commission
(Approved)

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2010

Commissioners Present

Sandra Bobowski
Temple Shannon
David Blatt
Edwin Vargas, Jr.
Gerry Pleasant, Alternate

Staff Present

Roger J. O'Brien
Kim Holden
Jonathan Mullen
Don Chapman

Commissioners Absent

John Lupo, Jr.
David Jorgensen, Alternate

I. Public Listening Session

- a. Comments will be taken regarding One City, One Plan, Hartford's Plan of Conservation and Development for the Blue Hills, Clay Arsenal, Northeast, North Meadow, Upper Albany neighborhoods.**

Chairperson Bobowski called the special meeting to order. She appointed Alternate Commissioner Pleasant to fill the vacancy. She gave a brief summary of the five theme meetings that had occurred in the fall as well as the previous three listening sessions. She stated that many comments made during those meetings were incorporated into the second draft of the Plan. She then stated that Roger O'Brien would be giving a presentation regarding One City, One Plan and how it affects the Blue Hills, Clay Arsenal, Northeast, North Meadow, and Upper Albany neighborhoods.

Mr. O'Brien gave a summary of the five theme panels that discussed the main goals of One City, One Plan. He discussed many of the priorities listed in the Plan specific to the featured neighborhoods. He stated that the Zoning Ordinance will have to be revised once the Plan is adopted. An audience member asked why this was the case and Mr. O'Brien stated that the table of permitted uses needs to be condensed into a shorter list as well as correlated with the land use on the future land use map.

Mr. O'Brien explained the purpose of a land use map and how it is different from zoning. He discussed the generalized land use categories. He also compared the differences between the existing and proposed future land use maps.

Mr. O'Brien then asked for questions regarding any of the maps displayed in the room. He then gave an explanation of each of the land use categories listed on the future land use map, and gave examples of locations in the City where each is implemented. He stated that the land use map is the basis for the zoning regulations.

An audience member asked if the area where Main Street and Albany Avenue meet would have any land use changes made to it. Mr. O'Brien stated that this was the area he was referring to as Downtown North and that he suspects it could be an area where workforce housing with retail could be built. He stated that there has been an approved redevelopment plan for designated parts of Downtown North.

Mr. O'Brien discussed how the NRZ plans are incorporated into One City, One Plan.

Mr. O'Brien described the boundaries of Blue Hills and discussed the proposed future land use map, goals for the neighborhood, and the changes that the NRZ proposed for the future land use map.

Keith Darby, the Chair of the Blue Hills NRZ, stated that the residents are very concerned about the traffic flow and speeding that occurs along the corridor that leads into the Town of Bloomfield. She stated that there should be more efficient parking along Blue Hills Avenue to prevent the traffic congestion. She also stated that there is a concern with tax revenue that may not be coming into the area because of vacant spaces designated for business. She discussed the old Green House space and how the owner is looking to sell it. She stated that the building is vacant and in disrepair, however she suggested that it be used for a venue for small businesses. She discussed the spaces such as the Marcus Darby building that have been designated as green space that were not previously. She also discussed the traffic and speeding issues that occur in front of the Rawson School and how recommendations from the traffic study that was done to the area should be implemented with the Plan.

Commissioner Pleasant responded to Ms. Darby's comments regarding traffic calming issues by stating other neighborhoods have the same issues and the speed bumps that have been installed throughout various parts have been very helpful. Mr. O'Brien stated that the Department of Public Works and a traffic calming plan need to correspond with neighborhood concerns and implement changes.

Keith Darby stated that a new location needs to be found for the Hartford Public Library and that the Planning Division should coordinate with them.

An audience member suggested that a sign be placed at Westbourne Parkway and Blue Hills Avenue saying, "Welcome to Blue Hills." She suggested improving and enforcing residential parking with more signs. She also suggested removing the one way signs on Pembroke Street that refer to church hours that no longer exist. Finally, she recommended putting something in the ordinance that does not permit small satellite dishes to be installed on the fronts of houses.

An issue was brought up regarding three family houses that are converted into churches without permits.

An audience member suggested turning vacant lots into neighborhood parking lots in order to get parked cars off both sides of the street. Commissioner Bobowski responded by stating that it is sometimes looked at as good urban planning to park on both sides of the street because it calms traffic and makes the environment more pedestrian friendly.

Mr. O'Brien discussed the proposed future land use map and goals designated for the Clay Arsenal neighborhood in the Plan.

An audience member suggested looking at the Clay Arsenal and Upper Albany neighborhoods as a whole and implementing connectivity between them.

Mr. O'Brien discussed the proposed future land use map and goals designated for the Northeast neighborhood in the Plan. He stated that one of the major changes in the land use map is the West side of Main Street where it used to be classified as industrial and it is being proposed as general business.

An audience member stated that the Plan should designate that area of Main Street as a redevelopment zone where retail can be implemented to coincide with all of the housing located there.

An audience member stated that the parking along Main Street should be addressed within the Plan.

An audience member asked if there were any proposals to do something with the Swift Factory building. Mr. O'Brien stated there had been a few demolition proposals, as well as redevelopment proposals to turn it into housing.

Mr. O'Brien discussed the proposed future land use map and goals designated for the Upper Albany neighborhood. He discussed the changes that the NRZ proposed for the future land use map. He stated that there are three major redevelopment projects in the Upper Albany neighborhood.

An audience member asked about the area on the corner of Albany Avenue and Woodland Street and how that could be redeveloped.

An audience member suggested that parking could be implemented behind the buildings from Woodland Street to Oakland Terrace.

An audience member mentioned the reuse of the Martin Luther King School. Mr. O'Brien stated that on the future land use map, that site is proposed as housing.

Mr. O'Brien discussed the proposed future land use map and goals designated for the North Meadows neighborhood.

An audience member suggested not leaving the land fill as green space on the future land use map just in case technology arises that could clean up the site to a point where it could be

redeveloped. A discussion then occurred about what could be developed at that site and how it would affect the Connecticut River.

Mr. O'Brien then discussed the revision process that would follow the listening sessions as well the public hearings that would take place for the Plan to get adopted.

Commissioner Bobowski closed the special meeting.

II. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Roger J. O'Brien, Secretary/Director